

serve the educational freshness of the central authority, and limit within reasonable bounds the display by it of those peculiarities which are too frequently manifest in all official bodies; through such a body, the interest of the Minister, and through him of the country at large, in current educational problems would be awakened and maintained, and he would become fully open to influence from without; at the same time, it should minimise the tendency to subordinate educational to political interests. But to secure these ends, the Council must contain a large professional element, and its members must not in any case be mere men of affairs, but fully acquainted with educational requirements.

It is impossible now to discuss the remaining recommendations.

At the outset, the Commissioners state that they have felt very strongly the need of dispatch, in order that the country may without delay derive advantage from legislation framed on proper lines. It is to be supposed that the late Government would have acted promptly in the matter, and it is to be hoped that its successors will be at once ready to appreciate the vast importance to our nation of well-considered legislation in the direction of the scheme put forward by the Commissioners. It would probably be difficult to prepare one in which due provision is more fully made to conserve what is good in our present system, while permitting the fullest play to the agencies which determine progress.

To conclude, in the eloquent final words of the Report, "it is not merely in the interest of the material prosperity and intellectual activity of the nation, but no less in that of its happiness and its moral strength, that the extension and reorganisation of secondary education seem entitled to a place among the first subjects with which social legislation ought to deal."

HENRY E. ARMSTRONG.

PAGAN IRELAND.¹

TO Colonel Wood-Martin is due the credit of the first attempt to co-ordinate the vast stores of archaeological lore which lie buried in the publications of the various Irish societies. The subject is a really fine one, and it was time that the data of Irish archaeology should be collated and presented in a convenient form. This the author has accomplished. There are two ways of regarding a book: the one is to expect the author to write the book in the way you (whoever "you" may happen to be) would like to have it written, and the other is the acceptance of the author's position, and to deal with the work from that point of view. It is not difficult to discover the ideals which the author has in this instance placed before himself. "In order to arrive at the truth, it is desirable to test the opinions and conclusions of those who, by a careful analysis of the probabilities and facts recorded by them, have travelled over the same ground before. . . . Antiquarian research in Ireland may, with advantage, be directed towards filling in the social history of primitive man; articles

which are the result of the handiwork of the aborigines illustrate, with much exactitude, life in the olden days. . . . If material objects be accepted as proofs of the pagan ideas and customs of the aborigines, surely the evidence of still existent superstitious observances of the peasantry, which can be traced to a pre-Christian source, ought to be received with, at least, the same authority. . . . It is to be hoped that research into the past, on these lines, may contribute to the reconstruction of early history." This is a sound method of treating archaeology; our author clearly recognises that the value of archaeology, whether it be of objects made by man, or of folk-lore, lies in the use to which it can be put in deciphering the early history of man, and he admits that in Ireland "we have made but little progress in higher scientific archaeology; and the ancient antiquities of Ireland still remain in an unclassified condition." This is a refreshing admission, and the justification of this statement is only too apparent to those who know the present unintelligent arrangement of the magnificent collections of the Royal Irish Academy, now housed in the Dublin Science and Art Museum. The splendid opportunities for archaeological

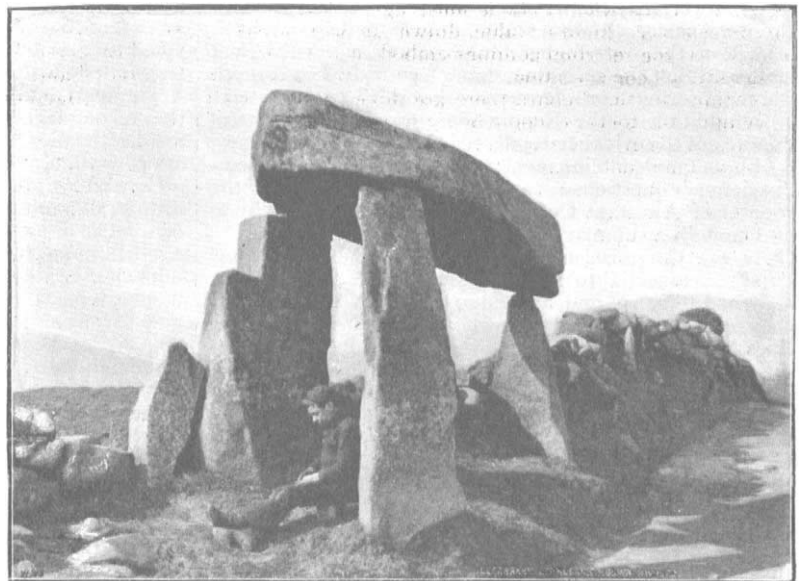


FIG. 1.—Legananny Cromleac, Castlewella, Co. Down, 10 feet in height. (From Welch's Irish views.)

research which exist in Ireland, are woefully neglected, and it is to be hoped that Colonel Wood-Martin's book will serve to stimulate an interest in this fascinating and promising field of inquiry. We are glad to note that he refers to the "vandalism" of the Board of Works with regard to ancient monuments; but a great deal more has yet to be said on this subject.

In his chapters on "Early History," "The Disposal of the Dead—Were the Aborigines Cannibals?" and "Traces of the Elder Faiths," the author deals with customs and beliefs as recorded in ancient accounts, or as witnessed for by actual remains, or as perpetuated in an attenuated form in folk-custom. The facts here collected together are most interesting, and throw considerable light on the early social condition of Ireland, a good deal of which will be new to the ordinary reader.

The author is very weak in his account of the ethnology of ancient Ireland; but this is a matter in which the author, not being a professed anthropologist, is not so much to blame, and there is yet much investigation to be done before we can speak with certitude. At

¹ "Pagan Ireland, an Archaeological Sketch. A Handbook of Irish Pre-Christian Antiquities." By W. G. Wood-Martin, M.R.I.A., author of "The Lake Dwellings of Ireland," "The Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland," &c. 689 pp., 410 figs., and map. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1895.)

all events it is a pity to promulgate the statement that "the Esquimaux and cognate people appear to be all members of the most primitive family amongst

leading, for the ordinary Palæolithic implement is as recognisable as the Neolithic.

A succinct account is given of the various kinds of stone arrow-heads, and of the bronze swords, daggers and spear-heads, and they are classified according to their several types; but we are not given any information as to their distribution, nor is any clue given as to their relative dates of the bronze weapons or of their foreign equivalents. The well-known story of the evolution of the socketed hatchet from the simple flat copper celt is, however, detailed. The famous gold ornaments are duly described, and from the number of ornaments in museums, especially in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, and from the records of finds, there is abundant evidence that Ireland was at one time very rich in that precious metal; indeed, it is probable that gold ornaments were an important article of trade, and we know that the Danes and other Scandinavians raided the country and rifled the tumuli and other tombs, being tempted by these valuables. During the present century, between £30,000 and £40,000 worth of gold ornaments are known to have been melted down.

A number of the mysterious rock-scribings are illustrated, but no fresh light is thrown upon them; indeed, the chapter on ornamentation is not so satisfactory as it might have been.

The book is well printed, copiously illustrated, carefully indexed, and one very valuable feature is the bibliography, which gives a classified list of over a thousand references.

To sum up: the author has aimed high, and has evidently spared no pains to do his best, and he has succeeded in producing a book which affords an extremely convenient introduction to Irish archæology; he has compiled diligently, but the exercise of more criticism, and of a broader way of regarding the data of archæology, would have resulted in a better



FIG. 2.—Inscribed Stone from a Carn on the Loughcrew Hills, Co. Meath.

the nations," and he adopts the view that the men of the period of the megaceros and the reindeer "approximated in type to that now inhabiting the Arctic regions." He is apparently unaware of the distinguishing cranial characters of the Lapps and Eskimo. While admitting that there is a culture analogy between the latter people and those of Neolithic times in the British Islands, there is no evidence for ascribing them to the same race. The figures of the skulls on p. 21 are ludicrously erroneous.

When Colonel Wood-Martin passes to the more well-beaten paths of archæology, there is less to criticise, and it is evident that he writes not only of facts gathered from a large range of reading, but also from wide personal knowledge. We have a satisfactory epitome of what is known on early domestic architecture in the shape of beehive huts, souterrains, cashels or forts, raths, and the like; as the author has made a special study of crannogs, the Irish lake-dwellings are adequately described. There is an interesting chapter containing a good deal of folklore on various rude stone monuments, including cromleacs, cairns or tumuli, pillar-stones, holed-stones, &c. Clay vessels and stone urns have a chapter to themselves, and a number of them are figured. In dealing with stone implements we find this statement: "In the Palæolithic or ancient stone period, the manufacture of implements was so rude that it is difficult to distinguish between the flints artificially chipped by human agency, and those shaped by natural causes." As it stands this is very mis-

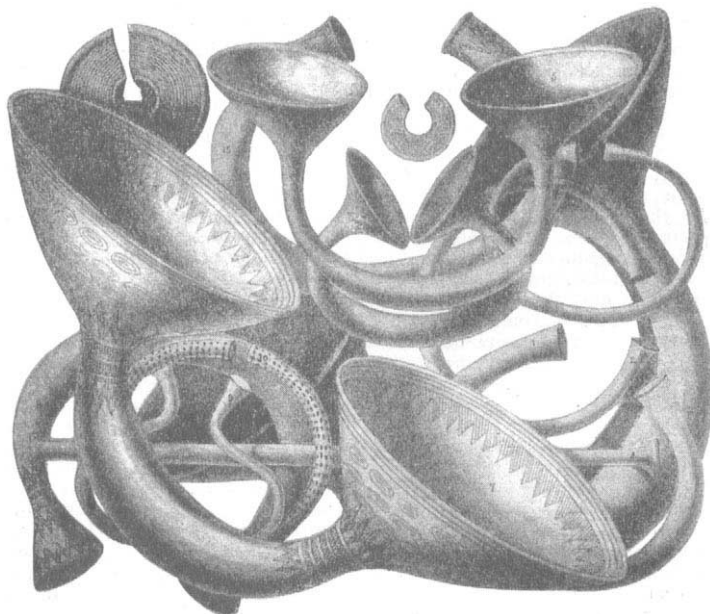


FIG. 3.—Group of miscellaneous Gold Ornaments (total value, £1000). Slightly less than one-half natural size.

book; despite his own ideals the author has not succeeded in getting, so to speak, outside his subject.